

FACT SHEET

WHAT TO DO IN FREEZING CONDITIONS

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent, deadly killer that claims approximately 1,000 lives each year in the United States. Such common items as automotive exhaust, home heating systems and obstructed chimneys can produce the colorless, odorless gas. The gas can also be produced by poorly vented generators, kerosene heaters, gas grills and other items used for cooking and heating when used improperly during the winter months.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headaches and dizziness.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, ventilate the area and get to a hospital
IMMEDIATELY!

- **NEVER** run generators indoors – open a window slightly when using a kerosene heater.
- **NEVER** use charcoal to cook indoors.
- **NEVER** use a gas oven to heat your home.

If You Have Lost Electrical Service

- Turn off or unplug lights and appliances to prevent a circuit overload when service is restored. Leave one light on to indicate power has been restored.
- Make sure fuel space heaters are used with proper ventilation.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.

Protecting Water Pipes

To prevent the mess and aggravation of frozen water pipes, protect your home, apartment or business by following the simple steps below.

- Turn on hot and cold-water faucets slightly, preferably in a basement sink – running water will not freeze as quickly.
- Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to non-insulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.
- If you plan to leave your residence, drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If Pipes Freeze

- In case pipes burst, make sure you and your family knows how to shut off the water. Stopping water flow minimizes damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.
- **NEVER** try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.
- Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water.

Generator Safety

Electric generators can provide you with piece of mind and convenience when you are faced with a temporary loss of electric service. Follow these safety guidelines when operating a generator:

- Before installing a generator, be sure to disconnect from your utility electrical service properly. If possible, have your generator installed by a qualified electrician.
- **NEVER** run a generator indoors. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generators exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.
- Run generators outside, downwind of structures.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Fuel spilled on a hot generator can cause an explosion. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.
- Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Most small, home-use portable generators produce from 350 to 12,000 watts of power. Overloading your generator can damage it and the appliances connected to it, and may cause a fire. Follow the manufacturers' instructions.
- Keep children away from generators at all times.

Kerosene Heaters

If you use kerosene heaters to supplement your regular heating fuel, or as an emergency source of heat, follow these safety tips:

- Follow the manufacturers' instructions.
- Use only the correct fuel for your unit.
- Refuel outdoors **ONLY**.
- Refuel only when the unit is cool.
- Keep the heater at least three feet away from furniture and other flammable objects.
- When using the heater, use fire safeguards and ventilate properly.

Fire Safety

Wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and heaters can add a cozy glow, but make sure you are using them safely.

- **ALWAYS** keep a screen around an open flame.
- **NEVER** use gasoline to start your fireplace.
- **NEVER** burn charcoal indoors.
- **DO NOT** close the damper when ashes are hot.
- When using alternative heat sources such as a fireplace or woodstove, always make sure you have proper ventilation.
- Keep curtains, towels and potholders away from hot surfaces.
- Have your chimney checked for creosote buildup and clean it.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Install smoke detectors and test them regularly.
- Establish a well-planned escape route with the entire family.

Food Safety

During a power outage, open your refrigerator and freezer as little as possible. Eat the most perishable items first, such as leftovers, meat, poultry and food containing milk, cream, sour cream, or soft cheese.

Despite your best efforts, the food in your freezer may partially or completely thaw before power is restored. Foods that have completely thawed, but are still cold and have been kept cold for no longer than one or two days after thawing, may be eaten or refrozen under certain conditions:

- Fruits may be eaten or refrozen if they still taste and smell good.
- Do not eat or refreeze vegetables that have thawed completely since bacteria multiply rapidly in them.
- Meat and poultry should be thrown away if their color or odor is poor or questionable, or if they have been held at a temperature warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.
- Fish and shellfish should not be eaten or refrozen once they have thawed.

Remember the general rule: When in doubt, throw it out!